

MASSACHUSETT SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT JUDICIARY-MEDIA COMMITTEE

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Judiciary-Media Committee was established in 1995 to help foster good working relationships and to improve better understanding between the judicial branch and the media, both print and electronic. The Committee helps to address and resolve problems, if possible, incurred by the media in gaining access to court proceedings and documents. It also assists judges and court personnel with questions and concerns involving the media. The Committee sponsors judiciary-media programs and conferences throughout the state in an effort to improve understanding and appreciation of the roles and functions of the judiciary and the media.

Co-chaired by Justice John M. Greaney, Associate Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, and Larry A. McDermott, Publisher of the Springfield Newspapers, the Supreme Judicial Court's Judiciary-Media Committee consists of judges from the Appellate Courts and the Trial Court departments, the United States District Court, clerk magistrates, editors of major newspapers statewide, radio and television executives, representatives of the state's two largest bar associations, the executive directors of the Massachusetts Judges Conference and the Flaschner Judicial Institute, and the court's public information officer.

Committee meetings are held in Boston several times a year. Each meeting usually begins with a guest speaker, alternating between the judiciary and the media. Topics have ranged from issues pertaining to cameras in the courtroom, media coverage of high-profile trials, and access to court documents and proceedings, to name a few. A portion of the meeting is also devoted to planning and implementing current and future projects.

The Judiciary-Media Committee has produced, updated, and distributed to judges, clerks, and the media the publication, *Guidelines on the Public's Right of Access to Judicial Proceedings and Records*, a compilation of statutes, rules and case law governing access to records and proceedings. The Committee has sponsored regional conferences for judges, clerks and the media, Law School for Journalists programs, and other such activities designed to promote better communication and understanding between the judiciary and the media. A Response Team of several committee members was also established to assist with advice to courts and the media with issues requiring timely attention.